5 20
60
5 10
41

HIS MAJESTIES Declaration

To all His loving Subjects of His Kingdom of *England* and Dominion of *Wales*.

CONCERNING Eccleſiaſtical Affairs.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

LONDON,
Printed by *John Bill* and *Chriſtopher Barker*, Printers to the Kings Moſt Excellent Majeſty, 1660.

73

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

HIS MAJESTIES DECLARATION

To all His loving Subjects of His Kingdom of *England* and Dominion of *Wales*,

Concerning

ECCLESIASTICALL AFFAIRS.

CHARLES R.

HOw much the Peace of the State is concerned in the Peace of the Church, and how difficult a thing it is to preserve Order and Government in Civil, whilest there is no Order or Government in Ecclesiastical Affairs, is evident to the World; and this little part of the World, Our own Dominions, hath had so late experience of it, that We may very well acquiesce in the Conclusion, without enlarging Our self in discourse upon it, it being a subject We have had frequent occasion to contemplate upon, and to lament, abroad as well as at home.

In Our Letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons from Breda, We declared how much We desired the Advancement and Propagation of the

74

Protestant Religion; That neither the unkindness of those of the same Faith towards Us, nor the Civilities and obligations from those of a contrary Profession (of both which We have had abundant evidence) could in the least degree startle Us, or make Us swerve from it, and that nothing can be proposed to manifest Our Zeal and Affection for it, to which We will not readily consent; And We said then, that We did hope in due time, Our Self to propose somewhat for the Propagation of it, that will satisfie the World, that We have always made it both Our Care and Our Study, and have enough observed what is most like to bring disadvantage to it. And the truth is, We do think Our Self the more competent to propose, and with Gods assistance to determine many things now in difference, from the time We have spent, and the experience We have had in most of the Reformed Churches abroad, in France, in the Low-Countries, and in Germany, where We have had frequent Conferences, with the most learned men, who have unanimously lamented the great Reproach the Protestant Religion undergoes from the distempers and too notorious Schisms in matters of Religion in England: And as the most learned amongst them have always with great Submission and Reverence acknowledged and magnified the established Government of the Church of England, and the great countenance and shelter the Protestant Religion received from it, before these unhappy times; So many of them have with great Ingenuity and Sorrow confessed that they were too easily misled by mis-information and prejudice into some dis-esteem of it, as if it had too much complyed with the Church of Rome; whereas they now acknowledge it to be the best Fence God hath yet raised against Popery in the World;

And

SP 29/19, f. 1-4

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

117
62

And We are perſwaded they do with great zeal wiſh it reſtored to its old Dignity and Veneration.

When We were in Holland, We were attended by many grave and learned Miniſters from hence, who were looked upon as the moſt able and principal Aſſertors of the Presbyterian opinions, with whom We had as much Conference, as the multitude of Affairs, which were then upon Us, would permit Us to have; and to Our great Satisfaction and Comfort found them Perſons full of Affection to Us, of Zeal for the Peace of the Church and State, and neither Enemies (as they have been given out to be) to Epiſcopacy, or Liturgy, but modeſtly to deſire ſuch alterations in either, as without ſhaking Foundations, might beſt allay the preſent diſtempers, which the Indiſpoſition of the time, and the tenderneſs of ſome mens Conſciences had contracted; For the better doing whereof, We did intend, upon Our firſt arrival in this Kingdom to call a Synod of Divines, as the moſt proper expedient to provide a proper remedy for all thoſe differences and diſ-ſatisfactions which had or ſhould ariſe in matters of Religion; and in the mean time, We publiſhed in Our Declaration from Breda a Liberty to tender Conſciences, and that no man ſhould be diſquieted or called in queſtion for differences of opinion in matter of Religion, which do not diſturb the Peace of the Kingdom, and that We ſhall be ready to conſent to ſuch an Act of Parliament as upon mature deliberation ſhall be offered to Us, for the full granting that Indulgence.

Whileſt We continued in this temper of mind and Reſolution, and have ſo far complyed with the perſwaſion of particular Perſons, and the diſtemper of the time, as to be contented with the exerciſe of Our Religion in Our own Chappel, according

75

to the constant practice and Laws established, Without enjoyning that practice, and the observation of those Laws in the Churches of the Kingdom; in which We have undergone the Censure of many, as if We were without that Zeal for the Church which We ought to have, and which by Gods grace, We shall always retein; We have found Our Self not so candidly dealt with as We have deserved, and that there are unquiet and restless Spirits, who without abating any of their own distemper in recompence of the Moderation they finde in Us, continue their bitterness against the Church, and endeavor to raise Jealousies of Us, and to lessen our Reputation by their Reproaches, as if We were not true to the Professions We have made: And in order thereunto, they have very unseasonably caused to be printed, published & dispersed throughout the Kingdom a Declaration heretofore printed in Our Name during the time of Our being in Scotland, of which We shall say no more than that the Circumstances by which We were enforced to signe that Declaration, are enough known to the World; And that the Worthiest and greatest part of that Nation did even then detest and abhor the ill usage of Us in that partitular, When the same Tyranny Was exercised there by the power of a few ill men, which at that time had spread it self over this Kingdom, and therefore We had no reason to expect that We should at this season, when We are doing all We can to Wipe out the memory of all that hath been done amiss by other men, and, We thank God, have Wiped it out of Our own remembrance, have been Our Self assaulted with those Reproaches, which We will likewise forget.

Since the Printing this Declaration, several seditious Pamphlets and Quæres have been publish-

ed

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

119
63

ed and ſcattered abroad, to infuſe, diſlike, and Jealouſies into the hearts of the People, and of the Army, and ſome who ought rather to have repented the former miſchief they have Wrought, than to have endeavored to improve it, have had the hardineſs to publiſh, that the Doctrine of the Church, againſt which no man With Whom We have conferred hath excepted, ought to be reformed as Well as the Diſcipline.

This over-paſſionate and turbulent Way of proceeding, and the Impatience We finde in many for ſome ſpeedy determination in theſe matters, whereby the minds of men may be compoſed, & the Peace of the Church eſtabliſhed, hath prevailed With Us, to invert the method We had propoſed to Our Self, and even in order to the better calling and compoſing of a Synode (Which the preſent Jealouſies Will hardly agree upon) by the aſſiſtance of Gods bleſſed Spirit, Which We daily invoke and ſupplicate, to give ſome determination Our Self to the matters in difference, until ſuch a Synod may be called, as may Without paſſion or prejudice, give Us ſuch farther aſſiſtance towards a perfect union of Affections, as Well as ſubmiſſion to Authority, as is neceſſary: And We are the rather induced to take this upon Us, by finding upon the full Conference We have had With the learned men of ſeveral perſwaſians, that the miſchiefs, under Which both the Church and State do at preſent ſuffer, do not reſult from any formed Doctrine or Concluſion Which either Party maintains or avows, but from the Paſſion and Appetite and Intereſt of particular Perſons, who contract greater prejudice to each other, from thoſe Affections, than would naturally riſe from their Opinions; and thoſe diſtempers muſt be in ſome degree allayed, before the meeting in

a

76

a Synod can be attended with better ſucceſs, than their meeting in other places, and their diſcourſes in Pulpits have hitherto been; and till all thoughts of Victory are laid aſide, the humble and neceſſary thoughts for the Vindication of Truth cannot be enough entertained.

We muſt for the honor of all thoſe of either perſwaſion with whom We have conferred, declare, That the Profeſſions and Deſires of all for the advancement of Piety and true Godlineſs, are the ſame; their Profeſſions of Zeal for the Peace of the Church, the ſame; of affection and Duty to Us, the ſame; They all approve Epiſcopacy; They all approve a ſet form of Liturgy; and they all diſprove and diſlike the ſin of Sacriledge, and the Alienation of the Revenue of the Church; And if upon theſe excellent Foundations, in ſubmiſſion to which there is ſuch a harmony of Affections, any Superſtructures ſhould be raiſed, to the ſhaking thoſe Foundations, and to the contracting and leſſening the bleſſed gift of Charity, Which is a vital part of Chriſtian Religion, We ſhall think Our Self very unfortunate, and even ſuſpect that We are defective in that adminiſtration of Government with which God hath entruſted Us.

We need not profeſs the high Affection and eſteem We have for the Church of England as it is eſtabliſhed by Law; the Reverence to which hath ſupported us with Gods bleſſing, againſt many temptations; nor do We think that Reverence in the leaſt degree diminiſhed by Our Condeſcentions, not peremptorily to inſiſt on ſome particulars of Ceremony, Which, however introduced by the Piety and Devotion, and Order of former times, may not be ſo agreeable to the preſent, but may even leſſen that Piety and Devotion, for the improvement

Whereof

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

122

whereof they might happily be first introduced, and consequently may well be dispensed with; and We hope this charitable compliance of Ours will dispose the mindes of all men to a cheerful submission to that Authority, the preservation whereof is so necessary for the Unity and Peace of the Church; and that they will acknowledge the support of the Episcopal Authority, to be the best support of Religion, by being the best means to contain the mindes of men within the Rules of Government: And they who would restrain ỹ exercise of that holy function within the Rules which were observed in the Primitive times, must remember & consider, that the Ecclesiastical Power being in those blessed times always subordinate & subject to the Civil; it was likewise proportioned to such an extent of Jurisdiction as was most agreeable to that; And as the Sanctity and Simplicity, and Resignation of that Age, did then refer many things to the Bishops, which the policy of succeeding Ages would not admit, at least did otherwise provide for; so it can be no reproach to Primitive Episcopacy, if where there have been great alterations in the Civil Government, from what was then, there have been likewise some difference and alteration in the Ecclesiastical, the Essence and Foundation being still preserved. And upon this ground, without taking upon Us to censure the Government of the Church in other Countreys, where the Government of the State is different from what it is here, or enlarging Our Self upon ỹ Reasons why, whilest there was an Imagination of erecting a Democratical Government here in the State, they should be willing to continue an Aristocratical Government in the Church: It shall suffice to say, that since by the wonderful blessing of God, the hearts of this whole Nation are returned to an obedience to

Monarchique Government in the State, it must be very reasonable to support that Government in the Church which is established by Law, and with which the Monarchy hath flourished through so many Ages, and which is in truth as ancient in this Island as the Christian Monarchy thereof; and which hath always in some respects or degrees been enlarged or restrained, as hath been thought most conducing to the Peace and Happiness of the Kingdom; and therefore We have not the least doubt but that the present Bishops will think the present Concessions now made by Us to allay the present distempers, very just and reasonable, and will very cheerfully conform themselves thereunto.

1. We do in the first place Declare Our purpose and Resolution is and shall be, to promote the power of Godliness, to encourage the exercises of Religion both publique and private, and to take care that the Lords day be applied to holy exercises, without unnecessary divertisements; and that insufficient, negligent, and scandalous Ministers be not permitted in the Church; And that as the present Bishops are known to be men of great and exemplar Piety in their lives, which they have manifested in their notorious and unexampled Sufferings during these late distempers; and of great and known sufficiency of Learning; So We shall take special Care, by the assistance of God, to prefer no man to that Office and Charge, but men of Learning, Virtue, and Piety, who may be themselves the best examples to those who are to be Governed by them; And We shall expect, and provide the best We can, that the Bishops be frequent Preachers, and that they do very often Preach themselves in some Church of their Dioces, except they be hindered by sickness, or other bodily infirmities, or some other justifiable occasion,

Which

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

65

which shall not be thought justifiable if it be frequent.

2. Because the Dioceses, especially some of them, are thought to be of too large extent: We will appoint such a Number of Suffragan Bishops in every Diocess as shall be sufficient for the due performance of their Work.

3. No Bishop shall Ordain, or exercise any part of Jurisdiction which appertains to the Censures of the Church, Without the advice and assistance of the Presbyters; And no Chancellors, Commissaries, or Officials, as such, shall exercise any Act of Spiritual Jurisdiction in these cases (viz.) Excommunication, Absolution, or wherein any of the Ministery are concerned, With reference to their Pastoral Charge. However Our intent and meaning is, to uphold and maintain the Profession of the Civil Law so far and in such matters as it hath been of use and practise within Our Kingdoms and Dominions; Albeit as to Excommunication, Our Will and Pleasure is, that no Chancellor, Commissary, or Official shall Decree any Sentence of Excommunication or Absolution, or be Judges in those things wherein any of the Ministery are concerned, as is aforesaid. Nor shall the Arch-Deacon exercise any Jurisdiction without the advice and assistance of six Ministers of his Arch-Deaconry, whereof three to be nominated by the Bishop, and three by the election of the major part of the Presbyters within the Arch-Deaconry.

4. To the end that the Deans and Chapters may be the better fitted to afford Counsel and Assistance to the Bishops, both in Ordination and the other Offices mentioned before; We will take Care that those preferments be given to the most Learned and Pious Presbyters of the Diocess; And moreover, that an equal number (to those of the Chapter) of the

78

the moſt learned, pious, and diſcreet Presbyters of the ſame Dioceſs, annually choſen by the major vote of all the Presbyters of that Dioceſs preſent at ſuch Elections, ſhall be always adviſing and aſſiſting, together with thoſe of the Chapter, in all Ordinations, and in every part of Jurisdiction which appertains to the Cenſures of the Church, and at all other ſolemn and important Actions in the exerciſe of the Eccleſiaſtical Jurisdiction wherein any of the Miniſtery are concerned: Provided that at all ſuch meetings the number of ỹ Miniſters ſo elected, and thoſe preſent of the Chapter ſhall be equal, and not exceed one the other, and that to make the numbers equal, the Juniors of the exceeding number be withdrawn that the moſt ancient may take place: Nor ſhall any Suffragan Biſhop Ordain or exercile the fore-mentioned Offices and acts of Spiritual Jurisdiction, but with the advice and aſſiſtance of a ſufficient number of the moſt judicious and pious Presbyters annually choſen as aforeſaid within his Precincts: And Our will is that the great Work of Ordination be conſtantly and ſolemnly performed by the Biſhop and his aforeſaid Presbytery, at the four ſet times and ſeaſons appointed by the Church for that purpoſe.

5. We will take Care that Confirmation be rightly and ſolemnly perform̃ed, by the Information and with the Conſent of the Miniſter of the place; who ſhall admit none to the Lords Supper, till they have made a credible Profeſſion of their Faith, and promiſed Obedience to the Will of God; according as is expreſſed in the Conſiderations of the Rubrick before the Catechiſm; And that all poſſible diligence be uſed for the Inſtruction and Reformation of ſcandalous Offenders, whom the Miniſter ſhall not ſuffer to partake of the Lords

Table,

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

125
66

Table, until they have openly declared themselves to have truly repented and amended their former naughty Lives, as is partly expressed in the Rubrick, and more fully in the Canons; Provided, there be place for due Appeals to Superior Powers. But besides the Suffragans and their Presbytery, every Rural Dean (those Deans, as heretofore, to be nominated by the Bishop of the Diocess) together with Three or four Ministers of that Deanery, chosen by the major part of all the Ministers within the same, shall meet once in every moneth, to receive such Complaints as shall be presented to them by the Ministers or Church-Wardens of the respective Parishes; and also to compose all such differences betwixt Party and Party, as shall be referred unto them by way of Arbitration, and to convince Offenders, and reform all such things as they finde amiss by their Pastoral Reproofs and Admonitions, if they may be so reformed: And such Matters as they cannot by this Pastoral and Perswasive way compose and reform, are by them to be prepared for, and presented to the Bishop; at which meeting any other Ministers of that Deanery, may, if they please, be present and assist. Moreover, the Rural Dean and his Assistants are in their respective Divisions to see that the children and younger sort be carefully instructed by the respective Ministers of every Parish, in the Grounds of Christian Religion, and be able to give a good account of their Faith and Knowledge, and also of their Christian Conversation conformable thereunto, before they be confirmed by the Bishop, or

79

admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

6. No Bishop shall exercise any Arbitrary Power, or do or impose any thing upon the Clergy or the People, but What is according to the known Law of the Land.

7. We are very glad to find, that all With whom We have conferred, do in their Judgements approve a Liturgy, or set Form of Publick Worship, to be Lawful; Which in Our Judgement, for the preservation of Unity, and Uniformity, We conceive to be very necessary: And though We do esteem the Liturgy of the Church of England, conteined in the Book of Common Prayer, and by Law established, to be the best We have seen; And We believe that We have seen all that are extant and used in this part of the World, and well know What Reverence most of the Reformed Churches, or at least the most Learned men in those Churches have for it; Yet since We find some exceptions made against several things therein, We will appoint an equal number of Learned Divines of both Perswasions, to re-view the same, and to make such alterations as shall be thought most necessary; and some additional Forms (in the Scripture phrase, as near as may be) suited unto the nature of the several parts of Worship, and that it be left to the Ministers choice to use one or other at his discretion. In the mean time, and till this be done, although We do heartily wish and desire, that the Ministers in their several Churches, because they dislike some Clauses and Expressions, would not totally lay aside the use of the Book of

Common

27. 67

Common Prayer, but read those parts against which there can be no exception, which would be the best instance of declining those marks of distinction, which We so much labour and desire to remove; Yet in Compassion to divers of Our good Subjects, who scruple the use of it as now it is, Our Will and Pleasure is, that none be punished or troubled for not using it, untill it be reviewed, and effectually Reformed, as aforesaid.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

8. Lastly, Concerning Ceremonies, which have administred so much matter of difference and contention, and which have been introduced by the Wisdom and Authority of the Church, for edification, and the improvement of Piety: We shall say no more, but that We have the more esteem of all, and Reverence for many of them, by having been present in many of those Churches where they are most abolished, or discountenanced; And it cannot be doubted, but that, as the Universal Church cannot introduce one Ceremony in the Worship of God, that is contrary to Gods Word expressed in the Scripture; so every National Church, with the Approbation and Consent of the Soveraign Power, may, and hath always introduced such particular Ceremonies, as in that conjuncture of time are thought most proper for edification and the necessary improvement of Piety and Devotion in the People, though the necessary practice thereof cannot be deduced from Scripture; And that which before was, and in it self is indifferent, ceases to be indifferent, after it is once established by Law: And therefore Our present Consideration and Work is, to gratifie the private Consciences of those

those Who are grieved With the use of some Ceremonies, by indulging to, and dispencing With their omitting those Ceremonies; not utterly to abolish any Which are Established by Law, (if any are practised contrary to Law, the same shall cease) Which Would be unjust, and of ill example; and to impose upon the Conscience of some, for the satisfaction of the Conscience of others, Which is otherWise provided for. As it could not be reasonable that men should expect, that We should Our Self decline, or enjoyn others to do so, to receive the Blessed Sacrament upon Our Knees, Which in Our Conscience is the most humble, most devout, and most agreeable posture for that Holy Duty, because some other men, upon reasons best, if not only known to themselves, choose rather to do it sitting or standing: We shall leave all decisions and determinations of that kinde, if they shall be thought necessary for a perfect and entire Unity and Uniformity throughout the Nation, to the advice of a National Synod, Which shall be duly called, after a little time, and a mutual Conversation betWeen persons of different perSWasions, hath mollified those distempers, abated those sharpnesses, and extinguished those jealousies which make men unfit for those Consultations; And upon such advice, We shall use Our best endeavour that such Laws may be established, as may best provide for the Peace of the Church and State. Provided that none shall be denied the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, though they do not use the gesture of kneeling in the Act of receiving.

In the mean time, out of Compassion and Compliance towards those Who would forbear the

S.P.29/19/13-16

68

the Crols in Baptiſm, We are content that no man ſhall be compelled to uſe the ſame, or ſuffer for not doing it: But if any Parent deſire to have his Childe Chriſtened according to the Form uſed, and the Miniſter will not uſe the Sign, it ſhall be lawful for that Parent to procure another Miniſter to do it: And if the proper Miniſter ſhall refuſe to omit that Ceremony of the Crols, it ſhall be lawful for the Parent, Who would not have his Childe ſo Baptiſed, to procure another Miniſter to do it, Who will do it according to his deſire.

No man ſhall be compelled to bow at the Name of JESUS, or ſuffer in any degree for not doing it, without reproaching thoſe Who out of their Devotion continue that ancient Ceremony of the Church.

For the uſe of the Surplice, We are contented that all men be left to their liberty to do as they ſhall think fit, without ſuffering in the leaſt degree for Wearing or not Wearing it; Provided, that this liberty do not extend to Our own Chappel, Cathedral, or Collegiate Churches, or to any Colledge in either of Our Univerſities; but that the ſeveral Statutes and Cuſtoms for the uſe thereof in the ſaid places, be there obſerved as formerly.

And becauſe ſome men, otherwiſe pious and learned, ſay, They cannot conform unto the Subſcription required by the Canon, nor take the Oath of Canonical Obedience; We are content, and it is Our Will and Pleaſure, (ſo they take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy) that they ſhall receive Ordination, Inſtitution, and Induction, and ſhall be permitted

81

to exercise their Function, and to enjoy the Profits of their Livings, without the said Subscription or Oath of Canonical Obedience: And moreover, That no Persons in the Universities shall for the Want of such Subscription be hindered in the taking of their Degrees. Lastly, That none be judged to forfeit his Presentation or Benefice, or be deprived of it, upon the Statute of the Thirteenth of Queen Elizabeth, Chapter the Twelfth, so he read and declare his assent to all the Articles of Religion, Which onely concern the Confession of the true Christian Faith, and the Doctrine of the Sacraments comprised in the Book of Articles in the said Statute mentioned. In a Word, We do again renew what We have formerly said in Our Declaration from Breda, for the liberty of tender Consciences, that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of Opinion in matters of Religion, Which do not disturb the Peace of the Kingdom; and if any have been disturbed in that kinde since Our arrival here, it hath not proceeded from any direction of Ours.

To conclude, and in this place to explain what We mentioned before, and said in Our Letter to the House of Commons from Breda; That We hoped in due time, Our Self to propose somewhat for the Propagation of the Protestant Religion, that will satisfie the World, that We have always made it both Our Care and Our Study, and have enough observed what is most like to bring disadvantage to it: We do conjure all Our Loving Subjects to acquiesce in, and submit to this

131
69

this Our Declaration concerning those differences which have so much disquieted the Nation at home, and given such offence to the Protestant Churches abroad, and brought such reproach upon the Protestant Religion in general, from the enemies thereof; as if upon obscure notions of Faith and Fancy, it did admit the practice of Christian Duties and Obedience to be discountenanced and suspended, and introduce a Licence in Opinions and Manners, to the prejudice of the Christian Faith. And let Us all endeavor, and emulate each other in those endeavors, to countenance and advance the Protestant Religion abroad, which will be best done by supporting the Dignity and Reverence due to the best Reformed Protestant Church at home; and which being once freed from the Calumnies and Reproaches it hath undergone from these late ill times, will be the best shelter for those abroad, which will by that Countenance both be the better protected against their enemies, and be the more easily induced to compose the differences amongst themselves, which give their enemies more advantage against them: And We hope and expect that all men will henceforward forbear to vent any such Doctrine in the Pulpit, or to endeavor to work in such manner upon the Affections of the People, as may dispose them to an ill opinion of Us and the Government, and to disturb the Peace of the Kingdom. Which if all men will in their several Vocations endeavor to preserve with the same Affection and Zeal We Our Self will do; all Our good Subjects will by Gods blessing upon Us enjoy as great

a

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

82

 1660

a meaſure of Felicity, as this Nation hath ever done, and which We ſhall conſtantly labor to procure for them, as the greateſt bleſſing God can beſtow upon Us in this World;

Given at Our Court at *Whitehall* this Twenty fifth day of *October*. 1660.

1660 Oct 25

LONDON:
Printed by *John Bill* and *Chriſtopher Barker*,
Printers to the KING'S moſt Excellent
MAJESTY. 1660.